

What is claimed is:

1. A method for distributing an advertisement associated with a service to a client device, said method comprising the steps of:

propagating said advertisement from a transmitter to said client device, said propagated advertisement forming an advertising signal containing advertising

5 information;

receiving said advertising signal at said client device;

decoding said advertising signal to extract said advertising information; and

displaying said advertising information to a user of said client device.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said advertising information comprises:

an XML element comprising:

service information enabling said user of said client device to make a

decision about said service;

5 data entry information informing said user about utilizing said service; and

contact information containing instructions for enabling said client device

to communicate with said service.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising the step of selecting said service based on said advertising information.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of constructing a user interface for allowing said user to communicate with said client device.

5. The method of claim 4 further comprising the step of receiving user inputs communicatively associated with said advertising information.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of formatting said user inputs and a portion of said advertising information into a user reply, said user reply for making said user inputs available to said service.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said user reply is received at said transmitter.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said user reply is received as a wireless signal from said client device.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein said user reply is received at said transmitter using a communication interface providing electromechanical contact between said client device and said transmitter.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of receiving a service response from said transmitter, said service response including at least one member selected from the group consisting of a graphical representation of said service for display on said client device, executable code for allowing said client device to interact with said service, and

5 text for display on said client device.

11. The method of claim 6 wherein said user reply is received at a point-of-presence (POP).

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said user reply is received over a personal digital assistant (PDA) interface providing electromechanical contact between said client device and said POP.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of receiving a service response from said POP, said service response including at least one member selected from the group consisting of a graphical representation of said service for display on said client device, executable code for allowing said client device to interact with said service, and text for display on said client device.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein said advertisement is propagated as an optical signal through air.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said optical signal has a wavelength in the range of substantially 850 nanometers to 1250 nanometers.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein said transmitter receives said advertisement over an Internet.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein said transmitter receives said advertisement over a fiber optic network.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein said client device is a personal digital assistant (PDA).

19. A method for conveying an advertisement from a transmitter having a link layer, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving said advertisement from a service;

formatting said advertisement for transmission to a client device operating within

5 a context associated with said transmitter; and

conveying said advertisement to said client device over a communication medium.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein said advertisement is comprised of an XML element.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein said advertisement includes:

service information enabling a user of said client device to make a decision about said service;

data entry information informing said user about utilizing said service; and

5 contact information containing instructions for enabling said client device to communicate with said service.

22. The method of claim 19 wherein said advertisement is conveyed from said transmitter as a diffuse infrared signal.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein said diffuse infrared signal has a wavelength in the range of substantially 850 nanometers to 1250 nanometers.

24. The method of claim 19 wherein said client device includes a client device physical layer and a client device link layer compatible with said link layer in said transmitter.

25. A method for receiving an advertisement from a transmitter having an emitter link layer associated therewith, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving said advertisement at a communication interface;

decoding said advertisement to extract information contained therein;

processing said information; and

displaying said information to a user.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said emitter link layer is compatible with a client device link layer associatively coupled to said communication interface.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein said information is displayed using a plug-in cooperatively associated with said advertisement.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said plug-in further includes information about a preference of said user.

29. A method of utilizing executable code in a transmitter for providing an advertisement to a client device operating within a coverage area associated with said transmitter, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving said advertisement from a service provider, said advertisement further
 5 being associated with a service offered by said service provider;
 formatting said advertisement for transmission to said client device; and
 conveying said advertisement from said transmitter to said client device over a communication medium.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein said advertisement is comprised of an XML element.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein said advertisement further comprises:
 service information enabling a user of said client device to make a decision about said service provider, said decision being based on said service information;

data entry information informing said user about utilizing a service associated
 5 with said service provider; and

contact information containing instructions for enabling said client device to communicate with said service provider.

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32. The method of claim 29 wherein said advertisement is conveyed from said transmitter as a diffuse infrared signal.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein said diffuse infrared signal has a wavelength in the range of substantially 850 nanometers to 1250 nanometers.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein said diffuse infrared signal is generated by modulating an electric light.

35. A method of utilizing executable code in a client device receiving an advertisement from a transmitter, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving said advertisement from an infrared communication signal conveyed from said transmitter and arriving at a communication interface associated with said client device, said advertisement containing at least a portion of a service offered by a service provider;

decoding said advertisement to extract information contained therein;

processing said information; and

displaying said information to a user of said client device;

36. The method of claim 35 wherein said advertisement is comprised of an XML element.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein said advertisement further comprises:
service information enabling said user to make a decision about said service, said
decision based on said service information;
data entry information informing said user about utilizing said service; and
5 contact information containing instructions enabling said client device to
communicate with said service provider.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein said transmitter includes an emitter link layer.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein said client includes a client device link layer.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein said emitter link layer is compatible with said
client device link layer.

41. The method of claim 40 wherein said information about said service is displayed
to said user if said client device is running a plug-in cooperatively associated with said
service.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein said plug-in further comprises information about
a preference of said user.